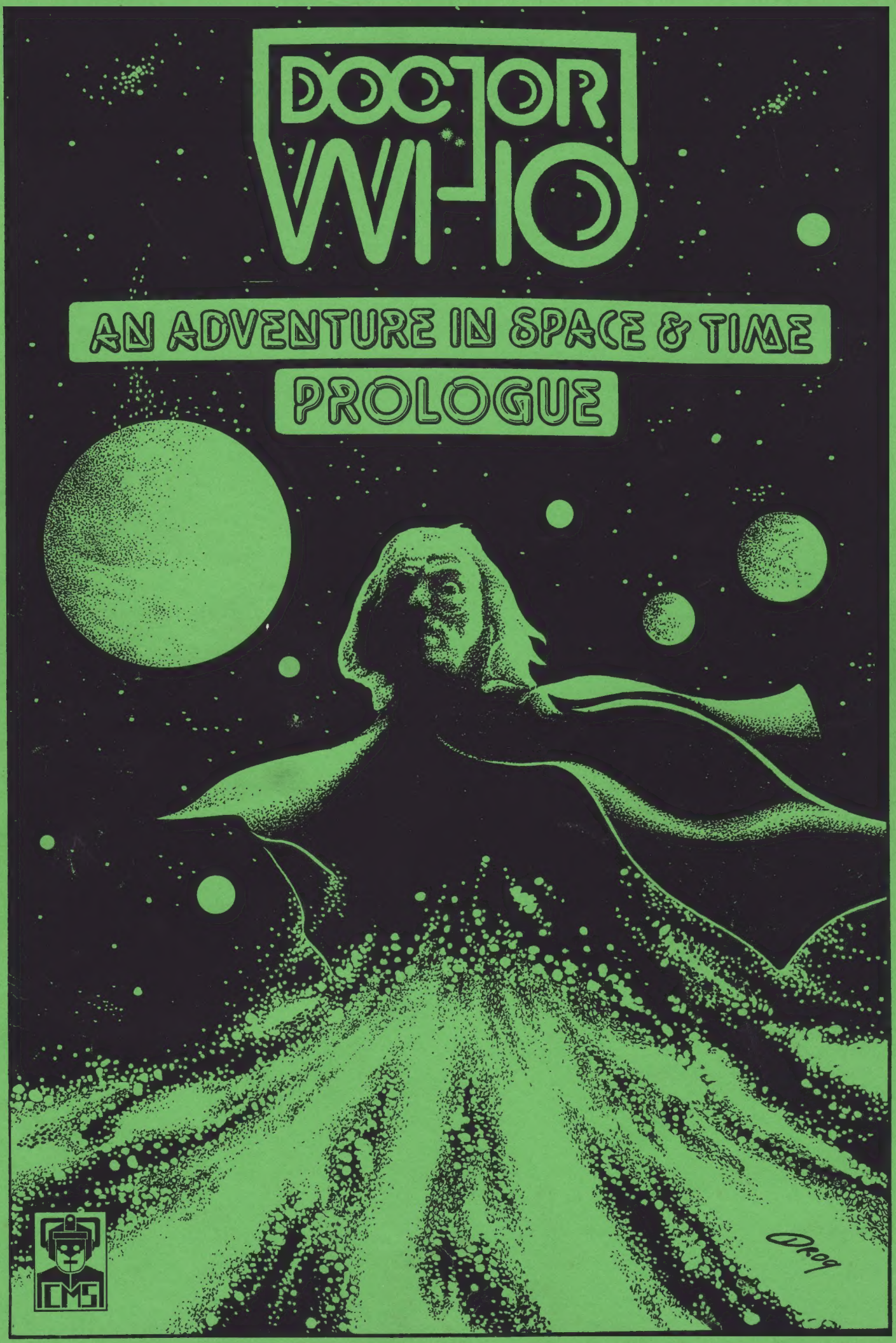
DOCTOR WHO

AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE & TIME

PROLOGUE



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AN ADVENTURE IN

PROLOGUE

SPACE AND TIME

'Doctor Who' is a television series. This must surely be the most obvious statement ever made in the vast wealth of literature on the subject. But if it is obvious then it should be equally apparent that the question how the series came to be created is not an easy or straightforward one to answer. For while the initial idea or inspiration for a television programme may come from one or more individuals, the programme as it finally appears on screen will inevitably be the product of many people's ideas and contributions. Moreover, no single programme or series can be considered in isolation; it must be seen in the wider context of television as a whole. Every new series, irrespective of its nature, will be made with regard to the tastes and demands of the viewing public; it will be influenced by current trends both in its own particular area of programming and in broadcasting generally; it will be tailored according to the position it is intended to occupy in the programme schedules; it will be affected by administrative and logistical factors within the organisation which produces it; and it will be constrained by the technical requirements and economic limitations of programme making.

To understand the creation of 'Doctor Who', the form it took, the type of programme it was, its content and even the particular gathering of individuals present at its inception, it is therefore necessary to place the series in its historical context. This Prologue to 'Doctor Who - An Adventure In Space And Time' is an attempt - albeit a brief one - to do just that, and to detail the steps which culminated in the transmission of the first episode of the series on 23rd November 1963.

As 'Doctor Who' is a BBC production, its roots can be traced back to the setting up of the Corporation - or, as it was originally, the Company - and the beginning of the world's first regular television service at 3 p.m. on 2nd November 1936, broadcasting from its Alexandra Palace head-quarters in London. The Corporation's first Chief Engineer, Peter Eckersley, observed that "the BBC was formed as the expedient solution of a technical problem; it owes its existence solely to the scarcity of wavelengths". So, having secured the airwaves for itself (or, depending on your point of view, the public), the Corporation had to do something with them. What they did can be attributed in large part to the influence of just one man, the first Director General of the BBC, John Reith.

Reith, in the words of Eckersley, "knew what he wanted and had the power and will to carry his ideas into practice". Perhaps. What was put into practice was the public service ethos; the Reithian maxim which was carried over from Radio into Television. It was "to educate, inform and entertain". "Entertain", it will be noted, came last on the list.

Light Entertainment. You can still hear the sneer of disdain today ringing down the decades. Light Entertainment was groundbait. The average viewer would be 'hooked' with a show like 'Bertram Mills' Circus' then fed, say, a programme of Beethoven. In this way the masses were to be induced up to the apex of a cultural pyramid.

All this changed on 22nd September 1955 with the arrival of commercial or, as it was euphemistically christened, independent television. As a leader in the first issue of the ITV journal 'TV Times' declared: "So far television in this country has been a monopoly restricted by limited finance and often, or so it seemed, restricted by a lofty attitude towards the wishes of viewers by those in control. That situation has now undergone a great and dramatic change. Viewers will no longer have to accept what has been deemed best for them. They will be able to pick and choose. And the new Independent Television programme planners aim at giving viewers what viewers want - at the times viewers want it."

During the period of its monopoly the BBC had become the bastion of British culture; high culture, that is. With its coverage of the Coronation in 1953 - its most ambitious and widely-seen broadcast to that date - it had even become associated with royalty. ITV was the 'opposition' and as such became associated with opposite values of low culture and popularism. While the BBC was synonymous with all that was British, ITV became associated with America.

In seeking to offer genuine alternatives to the Reith-bound styles and standards of the BBC and in an all-out bid to secure the high ratings needed to satisfy their advertisers, the ITV companies turned their sights across the Atlantic for both inspiration and expertise. American television thus arrived on the British screen in two ways. The first of these was through directly imported American programmes such as 'I Love Lucy' and 'Dragnet'; slick, fast and above all entertaining television the like of which British viewers had never seen before. The second, and perhaps more important, was via imported personnel who would make new British shows in the American style; personnel not from America itself but from the Commonwealth countries. Commonwealth citizens did not require a permit to work in Britain and as Australia and Canada already had established television industries it was primarily from these two countries that people flocked to snap up the large number of new jobs created by the arrival of ITV; more jobs than there were experienced people in Britain to take them. One of the people to arrive at this time was Sydney Newman.

A tough, no-nonsense Canadian, Newman had begun his career as a script-writer in his native country, progressing rapidly up the ladders of success in both the film and television industries. He had produced documentaries for the National Film Board of Canada and, as Head of Drama at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, had been a principal architect behind the modelling of Canadian television drama along the audience-grabbing lines of American shows. This, in turn, had brought him to the attention of the ITV companies in Britain, and on his arrival in the country in 1958 he joined the management of ABC TV with special responsibility for the creation of new drama programmes with a wide range of appeal.

At ABC Newman put into practice all he had learned about the virtues of American television with productions such as 'Playhouse 90' and 'Play of the Week'. In the field of the one-off play his particular contribution was to introduce gritty realism and the coverage of contemporary issues. In Britain these plays were immediately dubbed, with characteristic snobbery, 'kitchen sink' dramas.

Perhaps the most well-remembered of all the productions Newman was responsible for at ABC are 'The Avengers' and 'Armchair Theatre'. Almost un-noticed, however, has been the science fiction series he devised for children, which ran for three seasons between 1959 and 1961: 'Pathfinders in Space'. Each of the three serials - 'Pathfinders to the Moon', 'Pathfinders to Mars', 'Pathfinders to Venus' - ran for six or seven half-hourly episodes, broadcast week-

ly in what was generically termed Children's Hour. This series is significant in that it was, in many ways, 'Doctor Who's closest ancestor; far more in direct line of descent than the BBC's 'Quatermass' productions of the 1950s which are more often quoted as its immediate forerunners.

Writers for the 'Pathfinders' series were freelancers Eric Paice and Malcolm Hulke and the Pathfinders in question were astronauts from Earth, despatched in a rocketship to trail-blaze the new frontiers of the Moon, Mars and Venus. The crew, which changed slightly for each serial, included Peter Williams as Professor Wedgwood, members of the Professor's family such as his children and his grown-up niece, Gerald Flood as Captain Conway Henderson and a deranged elderly professor played by George Coulouris. The strongest character in the series was undoubtedly Coulouris' Professor; the one member of the Pathfinders team on whom one could never depend.

The first serial went out live and was not recorded. Looking back now, Gerald Flood recalls the horrified expressions on the faces of the gallery crew on discovering that the voice of one of the astronauts who was kitted out in full space suit and helmet could not be picked up as anything more than an unintelligible mumble by the studio microphones, and hence by the audience sitting at home!

The second and third seasons were pre-recorded, facilitating the use of filmed inserts to cover rudimentary model and special effects work. Although crude by today's standards, the 'Pathfinders' shows were both highly adventurous (for a low-budget, taped series) and quite frightening, especially with their weekly cliff-hanger endings. One episode in particular, which ended with an astronaut being submerged beneath a seething mass of vegetation, was infamous for having sent a good many children to bed that evening with the ominous prospect of nightmares to follow.

There are obvious parallels here with the form 'Doctor Who' was later to take. In his book 'With an Independent Air', Howard Thomas, one-time Managing Director of ABC TV, claims that Sydney Newman actually devised 'Doctor Who' itself while still working at ABC (see 'The Black and White of Doctor Who - Part 1', page "BW1-05"). Newman refutes this, however, suggesting that Thomas may have been confusing 'Doctor Who' with his 'Pathfinders' creation. "After 'Doctor Who' was launched," he explains, "I often joked that I'd used 'Pathfinders in Space' at ABC as a kind of dummy run for the series. But that was an after-the-fact quip which might have gotten back to Howard Thomas and so been misunderstood. I can assure you that the whole notion of 'Doctor Who' was dreamed up entirely at the BBC..."

Newman's move to the BBC came in December 1962. The ITV companies' drive for popularist entertainment had been eminently successful, and had achieved what was widely seen as a considerable victory over the BBC in the so-called 'ratings war' (see 'The Black and White of Doctor Who - Part 2'). Pressure was being mounted, both within and outside the Corporation, for something to be done.

Gerald Flood, the journalist-pilot

Pamela Barney, the Moon professor

PATHFINDERS TO MARS

A SERIAL IN 6 EPISODES

by MALCOLM HULKE and ERIC PAICE

Starring

Peter Williams as Professor Wedgwood

George Coulouis as The Impostor

Gerald Flood as Conway Henderson

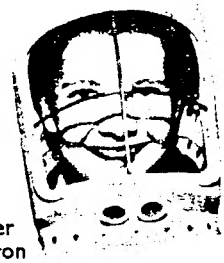
Designed by DAVID GILLESPIE

Programme Adviser MARY FIELD

Producer SYDNEY NEWMAN

Directed by GUY VERNEY

Stewart Guidotti



Hester Cameron

OFF TO MARS WITH THE PATHFINDERS

This resulted in the adoption of a policy of 'if you can't beat them, recruit them', with senior positions at the BBC being offered to people at ITV. One such person was Sydney Newman who, eventually, accepted the post of Head of Drama.

Moving to the BBC meant accepting a drop in salary (although Newman amusedly recalls the £17 10/- yearly 'perk' he inherited, allowed for the hire of dinner jackets). The compensations for this were far wider powers of artistic control than he had been afforded at ABC and much larger and more sophisticated studio facilities. The Corporation was vastly bigger and had far greater resources than any one of the ITV companies - and Newman was being offered the chance to re-shape parts of it to his own specifications.

Almost Newman's first act at the BBC was to do away with the existing Script Department headed by Donald Wilson. This unit had originally been set up to refine the art of writing specifically for television; either by seeking out works of literature suitable for adaptation or by commissioning new material and shaping it into the correct form. In the 1950s the scheme had been established whereby promising writers were put on staff, forming an in-house writers' 'workshop' to learn the new disciplines which the medium imposed. Nigel Kneale had been the first writer involved in this scheme, working under Michael Barry (Head of Drama before Sydney Newman) and Donald Wilson. This set-up had proved only moderately successful however, and had soon outgrown its structure. Newman, realising that the Script Department had become hopelessly outdated, decided to establish in its place three separate Departments: Series, Serials and Plays.

Series were continuing productions broken down into individual episodes which might or might not inter-link with each other, but which would feature recurring settings and characters. Programmes like 'Doctor Finlay's Casebook' and 'Maigret' fell into this category. Serials were weekly programmes, often year-round in production, the episodes of which would always end with a 'hook' to persuade the viewer to tune in again the following week to see the continuation. Examples here were 'Compact' and, later, 'The Newcomers'. Plays were just that: one-off productions including, strangely enough, opera, which it was felt owed more to drama than to music. Even these single productions were often given the appearance of being series, however, by the use of umbrella titles which would easily identify their content to the viewer. Initially these titles were 'Festival' for classical plays old and new and 'First Night' as a showcase for new writers, competing with 'Armchair Theatre' on Saturday evenings.

A revised production hierarchy was also instigated by Sydney Newman. Before, as typified by Rudolph Cartier on the 'Quatermass' shows, a producer had been expected to produce, direct and, to an extent, liaise with the writer on script content. Under the new system instituted by Newman, each producer would be allocated a story (script) editor to relieve him of that overhead, and have access to a pool of (mainly staff) directors actually to make the programmes. The Producer would still be in over-all charge, but his or her role would now be far more strategic than tactical.

Considering the somewhat sweeping nature of the changes made by Newman, it is perhaps surprising - and possibly indicative of the seriousness of the BBC's concern - that it took just the first quarter of 1963 to complete the groundwork for them. While this was being done, Newman was also involved in devising, approving and setting up many new programmes with which to take on and hopefully defeat ITV in the battle for viewers. Similar moves were being made across the whole range of the BBC's output, and it was during this period in the Corporation's history that shows as diverse and widely-appealing as 'Tonight', 'Panorama' and 'Blue Peter' first went into production. By this stage it had clearly become a higher priority to entertain than to educate and inform. This is very well illustrated by the fact that the Drama Department became more prestigious than Outside Broadcast. The latter had always been prestigious; it was at the forefront of technological development and was suitably edifying, being the veritable 'window on the world'. Also significant is the fact that Outside Broadcast programmes were, and indeed still are relatively cheap to produce; which explains why there have always been a disproportionate number of sports programmes on television.

It is, of course, impossible to overstate the importance of financial considerations; if there is one thing that is more influential than any individual or group of individuals in television, it is money. The proliferation of series and serials in the 1960s was due in part to the fact that they were overall much cheaper and easier to make than one-off productions. Apart from the obvious advantages of re-usable sets, costumes, props and so on, now that series and serials were built around production teams responsible for output all year round, rather than individual producers, it was possible for studios, camera crews, design effort, staff and money to be blocked twelve months in advance. In other words, it meant that orders and contracts could be placed for twelve months, with the advantages of price to the BBC and security to suppliers, writers and performers.

The main reason why series and serials flourished, however, was not the financial one but the fact that they constituted an essential element in the newly-discovered art of scheduling, persuading viewers to tune in episode after episode, week after week, month after month. Sydney Newman was very well aware of the benefits of good scheduling, as producer Irene Shubik confirms: "Sydney realised that audiences operate very much on a Pavlov's dog principle. They will tune in to see those programmes they are conditioned to having seen and enjoyed."

Scheduling at its simplest entailed merely the placing of programmes in regular time slots. Competition with ITV did not so much take the form of placing like against like (although that certainly did occur), as of trying to hook the viewer first. It was assumed that once hooked the viewer would remain hooked for life; or for the evening, at least. The early evening was therefore a very important time. And according to Sydney Newman it was a question of early evening scheduling which acted as the catalyst to the creation of 'Doctor Who'. He takes up the story:

"As Head of the Drama group I was privy to problems of scheduling. Probably articulated by Donald Baverstock, Controller BBC1, or Stuart Hood, Controller Programmes, there was a gap in ratings on Saturday afternoons between BBC's vastly popular sports coverage, ending at 5:15 p.m., and the start at 5:45 p.m. of an equally popular pop music programme ('Juke Box Jury'). What was between them was, I vaguely recall, a children's classic drama serial, i.e. Charles Dickens dramatisations etc. This could be moved to Sunday if Drama Department could come up with something more suitable.

"So we required a new programme that would bridge the state of mind of sports fans and the teenage pop music audience while also attracting and holding the children's audience accustomed to their Saturday afternoon serial. So that's the 'why' of 'Doctor Who'.

"The problem was, as I saw it, that it had to be a children's programme and still attract adults and teenagers. And also, as a children's programme, I was intent upon it containing basic factual information that could be described as educational - or, at least, mind opening for them.

"So my first thought was of a time-space machine (thanks to H.G. Wells) in which contemporary characters (one of whom I wanted to be a 12-13 year old) would be able to travel forward and backward in time and inward and outward in space. All stories were to be based on scien-

tific and historical facts as we knew them at that time.

"Space also meant outer space, intergalactic travel, but again based on understood fact. So no bug-eyed monsters which I had always thought to be the cheapest form of science fiction.

"Re time. How wonderful, I thought, if today's humans could find themselves on the shores of England seeing and getting mixed up with Caesar's army in 54 B.C., landing to take over the country; be in burning Rome as Nero fiddled; get involved in Europe's tragic thirty years war, etc., etc.

"That was the scheme, so how to dress it up?

"One thing I was certain of. The space time machine had to be a very pedestrian-looking, everyday object to shock audiences into not taking the world around them for granted. It must be vast inside but small outside.

"Well, how did it get to be on Earth? Who would run it?

"To answer both questions I dreamed up the character of a man who is 764 years old - who is senile but with extraordinary flashes of intellectual brilliance. A crotchety old bugger (any kid's grand-father) who had, in a state of terror, escaped in his machine from an advanced civilisation on a distant planet which had been taken over by some unknown enemy. He didn't know who he was any more, and neither did the Earthlings, hence his name, Dr. Who. He didn't know precisely where his home was. He did not fully know how to operate the time-space machine.

"In short, he never intended to come to our Earth. In trying to go home he simply pressed the wrong buttons - and kept on pressing the wrong buttons, taking his human passengers backwards and forwards, and in and out of time and space.

"I also felt that no serial/story should last longer than between four and six episodes (I didn't want to risk losing audiences for longer should one story not appeal). Each episode had to end with a cliff-hanger and repeat this at the start of the next episode.

"I believe I put the above into a memo addressed to Donald Wilson, whom I had appointed as my Head of Serials. I called him into my office, handed my memo to him and immodestly said, 'Here's a great idea for Saturday afternoons. What do you think?

"Donald perused it, looked up at me, scratched his head, grinned and said, 'Not bad. Maybe.' Donald was a very cautious Scot, but his 'maybe' was right. A lot of ideas can really go to hell in production; writing, casting, direction all being uncertain variables."

With the basic idea for 'Doctor Who' now conceived, the next step was to develop that idea into a more detailed series format and to devise the main characters and their backgrounds. As both Newman and Wilson naturally had a great deal of other work demanding their attention, Wilson brought in to assist them in this task a highly-regarded member of the BBC's team of in-house script-writers, C.E. Webber (known as 'Bunny' to all at the Corporation), who had previously scripted, amongst many other things, some very popular adaptations of the 'Just William' children's books. Liaising closely, Wilson, Webber and Newman fleshed out the original idea for 'Doctor Who' into a three or four page breakdown. Satisfied that the series was a viable one, but with the 'maybe' worry still at the back of his mind, Wilson then began the process of assembling a production team by appointing David Whitaker as Story Editor.

Born at Knebworth in 1928, Whitaker spent his early career in the theatre, writing for, acting in and directing productions for a wide range of companies, including the celebrated York Repertory Group. It was while he was working for York Rep that one of his plays, 'A Choice of Partners', was seen in production by a member of the BBC Script Department. They bought the play and commissioned Whitaker to adapt it for television, and on the strength of this Donald Wilson invited him to join the Department as a staff writer, in 1957.

For the next few years Whitaker immersed himself in all aspects of television writing. He scripted six plays, contributed episodes to many series and serials (all of which went into production), provided lyrics for a musical (he was an accomplished pianist) and even wrote comedy links for several variety shows.

His introduction to 'Doctor Who' did not exactly have the air of history in the making. It came quite out of the blue one morning while he was working in his office at the BBC. Donald Wilson, known for his brevity and succinctness in speech, came in, handed him the series format and all but said, "It's called 'Doctor Who'. It's science fiction set in a London Police Box. I'd like you to write it up for me. Away you go", and then left.

Fortunately Wilson could have chosen few better writers than David Whitaker to be the series' first Story Editor. Whitaker's first wife, actress June Barry (herself destined for fame in Donald Wilson's adaptation of Galsworthy's 'The Forsythe Saga') explains:

"David was a tremendous lateral thinker, with an extraordinary talent for transmitting his enthusiasm to others. He'd look at a problem and come up with a totally different answer to the one you'd expect.

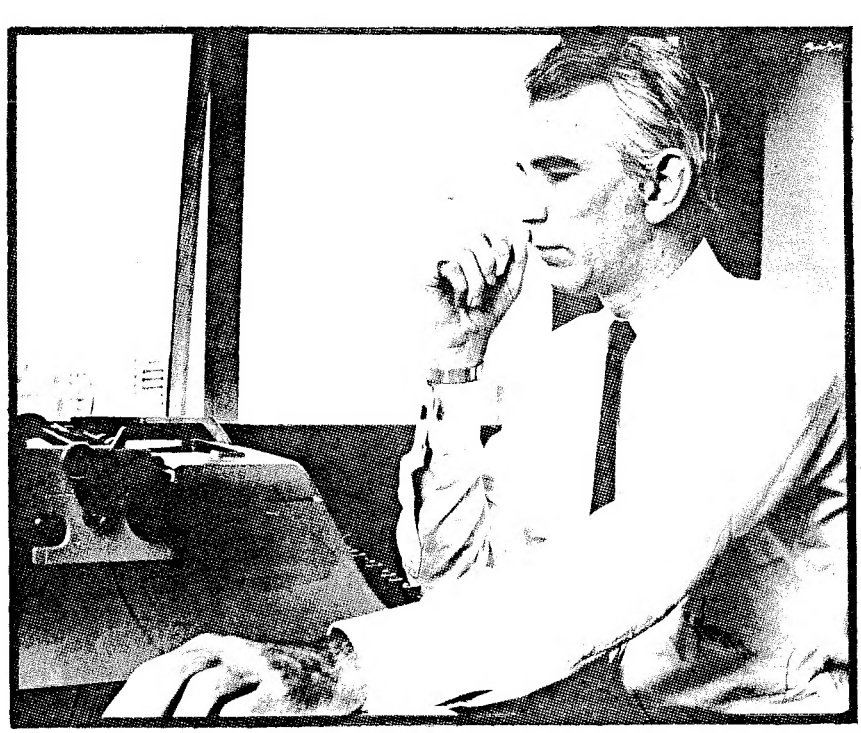
"As a person David was almost a man born out of his period. He had impeccable manners that somehow always reminded you of an older, bygone age. He'd never lost his links with children either. He could always talk to them on their level without ever sounding patronising, like most adults do. He used to read a bit of science fiction, especially by Ray Bradbury, and he used to love all those 1920s 'Bulldog Drummond' type stories."

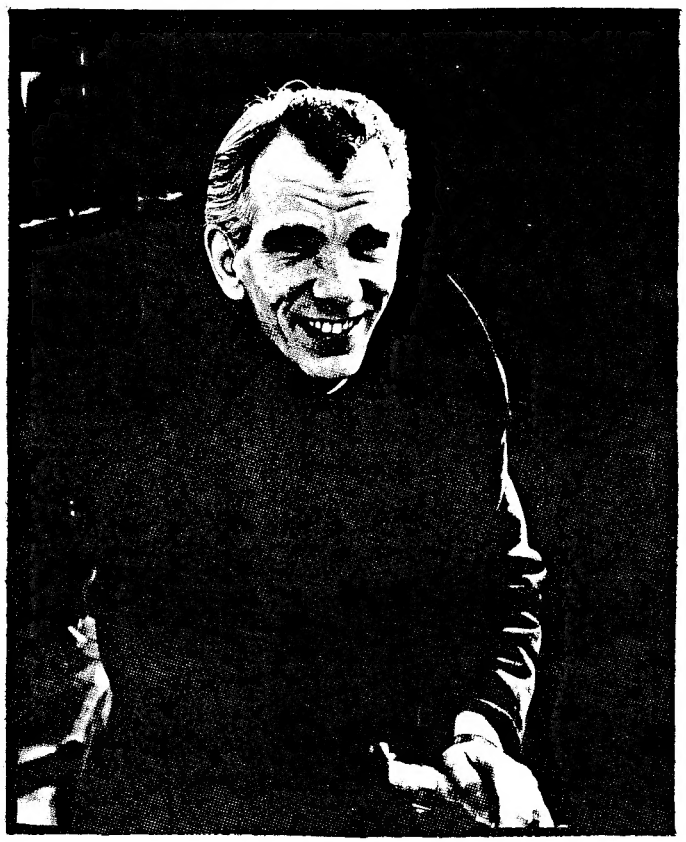
With Whitaker installed as the series' Story Editor, the next post to be filled was that of Producer. Sydney Newman recounts how the choice was made:

"When Donald and I discussed who might take over the responsibility for producing the show, I rejected the traditional drama types, who did the children's serials, and said that I wanted somebody, full of piss-and-vinegar, who'd be prepared to break rules in doing the show. Somebody young with a sense of 'today' - the early 'Swinging London' days.

"I 'phoned Verity Lambert, who had been on my 'Armchair Theatre' staff at ABC. She had never directed, produced,

RIGHT: David Whitaker at his typewriter. Whitaker joined the BBC in 1957 as a scriptwriter and adaptor. His work covered plays, situation comedy, numerous spectaculars and light entertainment features, musical biographies - the most notable being 'Hello Ragtime' - and series like 'Compact' and 'Garry Halliday'. He had been a script editor in Light Entertainment and for Sunday night plays in Drama before being asked to work on 'Doctor Who'.





acted or written drama but, by God, she was a bright, highly intelligent, outspoken Production Secretary who took no nonsense and never gave any - but all with winning charm. I offered her the job and after Donald Wilson met her she joined us. I have a vague recollection that Donald Wilson at first sniffed at Verity Lambert's 'Independent' ways. Knowing both of them, I knew they would hit if off when they got to know one another better. They did."

Although 'Doctor Who' was envisaged as a series more concerned with people than with special effects, both Sydney Newman and Donald Wilson were keen that it should use television, as a medium, to its fullest. They therefore decided that the inexperienced Verity Lambert ought to have someone working with her who was more well-versed in the purely technical aspects of programme making. The man they chose was seasoned producer and director Mervyn Pinfield, whom they appointed as Associate Producer.

With the three principal members of the 'Doctor Who' production team now in post, the job of actually getting the show into production could begin in earnest. It had been decided at an early stage that the first two stories should be scripted by an in-house BBC writer who would be available to work with David Whitaker over an extended period of time, thus hopefully ensuring that the series was launched along exactly the lines desired. This task fell to Anthony Coburn, an Australian who had worked as a butcher's assistant before turning to writing and who had been on staff at the BBC since first coming to Britain.

While working with and advising Coburn on the content of his scripts, David Whitaker also spent some time preparing a six-page Writers' Guide to the show which would be sent out to potential freelance contributors. This Guide described 'Doctor Who' as an exciting adventure/science fiction drama serial for children's Saturday viewing which would run for fifty-two weeks and consist of a series of stories, each in themselves separate entities but linked to make up the continuity. Each story, it was explained, would run from between four to ten episodes and each episode would have its own title and be of twenty-five minutes in length. Every episode would reach a climax about half way through and end with a strong cliff-hanger.

The Guide then set out the background to the stories and explained the approach writers should take in formulating their ideas, following very closely the original series format Whitaker had been given by Donald Wilson. The basic premise of the show was described as that of four characters projected into real environments based on the best factual information of situations in time and space, and in any material state that could be realised in practical terms. Using unusual, exciting backgrounds or ordinary backgrounds seen unusually, each story was to have a strong informational core based on fact. Courtesy of their 'ship', the characters might find themselves in a wide variety of different situations: caught up in events at some point in Earth's history; in their own time but reduced to the size of a pinhead; on the dying planet of Mars; or perhaps on some as yet undiscovered world in another galaxy which seems identical to Earth yet where certain values are altered. It was emphasised that once in any given situation the travellers would have only their intelligence and ingenuity on which to rely and would not be able to resort to 'ray guns' or other such gimmickry. It was further made clear that the travellers would not be able to make or change established history. They were to be four people plunged into alien surroundings armed with only their courage and cleverness.

Following this, the Guide gave a brief profile of each of the four main characters - Doctor Who, Susan, Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright - as devised by Donald Wilson, 'Bunny' Webber and Sydney Newman and refined by David Whitaker and Anthony Coburn. Doctor Who was said to be a doctor of science, over sixty years old, who was frail-looking but wiry and tough like an old turkey. Depending on the situation he might appear bewildered, suspicious or cunning. He would sometimes act with impulse more than reasoned intelligence but could be quite considerate and wise, and eagerly responsive to intelligence. His forgetfulness and vagueness would alternate with flashes of brilliant thought and deduction. He had escaped from the 50th century because he found life there unpleasant and was now searching for another existence into which he could settle; but his control over the 'ship' was like that of the average driver over a motor car - he was its master when it worked properly but its bewildered slave when it was temperamental. His companions would continually try to help him find 'home', but would never be sure of his motives. Susan was the Doctor's grand-daughter, aged fifteen. A sharp, intelligent girl, quick and perky, she would nevertheless make mistakes due to her inexperience. Addicted to 20th century teenage life, she was to be seen at the beginning of the story attending a school in 1963, having persuaded her grandfather to stay in this time period to allow her to create at least one complete section of experience. Due to travelling around in the 'ship' she had a wide general knowledge and was quite expert in some subjects, but lamentably ignorant in others.

Ian Chesterton was to be a teacher of applied science at Susan's school, a twenty-seven year old 'red-brick University'-type on whom Susan would have something of a crush. A good physical specimen, a gymnast, dexterous with his hands, and fortunate to possess the patience to deal with Doctor Who and his irrational moods. He would occasionally clash with the Doctor on decisions, but would be able to make intelligent enquiry and bring sound common sense to bear at moments of stress. Barbara Wright was to be another member of staff at Susan's school; an attractive, twenty-three year old History teacher. Timid but capable of sudden courage. Although there was to be no question of a romance developing between her and Ian, her admiration for the man would lead to under-currents of antagonism between her and Susan.

The Guide then went on to describe the Doctor's 'ship', explaining that it could travel through space, time and matter. A product of the year 5733, it would not be able to move further forward than that date or else the Doctor and Susan would be able to discover their own destinies - and the authorities of the 50th century had deemed forward sight unlawful. However, this would still enable Ian and Barbara, and therefore the audience, to see into times far beyond the present day. The Ship, when first seen, was to have the outward appearance of a Police Box, but the inside would reveal an extensive electronic contrivance and comfortable living quarters with occasional bric-a-brac acquired by the Doctor in his travels. Primarily, the machine would have a 'yearometer' which would allow the traveller to select his stopping place. In the first story, however, the controls would become damaged and the Ship uncertain in performance. Hence, once set upon their journey Ian and Barbara would never be able to return to their own time and place in their natural forms.

Finally, by way of illustration, the Guide gave a very brief synopsis of the two Anthony Coburn scripts which were to open the series. In the first, a four-part story, the journey would begin and the travellers be transported back in time to 100,000 B.C. and an encounter with mid-Paleolithic man. In the second, which was to be slightly longer at six episodes, the Ship would move forward in time to around the 30th century, to find the human race extinct and the world inhabited only by robots. It would be learnt that the robots, used to a life of service, had built a master robot capable of original thought but, realising the dangers, had rendered their invention inoperative - even though this meant that they themselves sank into total inertia. Unaware of this situation at first, the four travellers would bring the robots and then the

new invention 'to life' and have to face the dangers inherent in a pitiless computer.

David Whitaker sent out his Writers' Guide to a number of writers and agents in the late spring of 1963, inviting the submission of three or four page storylines for his consideration. One place to which he sent it was the 'writer's bolthole', Associated London Scripts (ALS) (see 'The Black and White of Doctor Who' - Part 1, page "BW1-03"). June Barry describes this place as "that mad-house off the Bayswater Road which was partly owned by Spike Milligan and partly by Galton and Simpson. It was a hot-bed of writers, many of whom had their own offices in the house which they rented out to use whenever they wanted to get away from home or from the studios".

Storylines soon began to arrive on Whitaker's desk and by the end of July 1963 - just some seven months after Sydney Newman first joined the BBC and set the ball rolling - he had commissioned the first script from a free-lance writer, 'Dr. Who and a Journey to Cathay' by John Lucarotti. In this story the four characters would become involved in the travels of the great Venetian explorer Marco Polo; a subject well-known to Lucarotti as he had previously written a series on the same theme for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (see page "22-07"). By this time, having paused only briefly to marry June Barry in June 1963, Whitaker had also carried out further work on Anthony Coburn's two scripts, which now had the working titles 'Dr. Who and the Tribe of Gum' and 'Dr. Who and the Robots'. There is an amusing story that it was actually Coburn himself who devised many of the important elements of 'Doctor Who' while sitting on the lavatory (see page "19-07"). While this is doubtless apocryphal, it seems clear that Coburn did contribute a great deal to the series. Producer Verity Lambert recalls that it was he who suggested that Susan should be the Doctor's grand-daughter rather than simply a travelling companion. "I think that Anthony Coburn felt there was something not quite proper about an old man travelling around the galaxy with a young girl for a companion," she explains. It was also in discussions between Coburn and David Whitaker that the time-space machine was christened TARDIS - Time and Relative Dimension in Space.

While Whitaker had been hard at work on the series' scripts, Lambert herself had been far from idle. On the production side, she had asked Waris Hussein to direct the first and third stories and Rex Tucker to handle the second, and had also started to assemble the designers and technical crew who would work on the first few episodes. Both Hussein and Tucker were experienced directors, the former having previously been responsible for episodes of 'Compact' and 'Moonstrike', a 'Suspense' play called 'One Step from the Pavement' and the Sunday play 'The Shadow of Mart', and the latter having directed an adaptation of 'Jane Eyre' and numerous other BBC productions, including two 'Suspense' plays - 'The Troubled Heart' and 'The Tourelle Skull' - as well as producing his own play 'The Pretender' in August 1962 and writing numerous television plays and episodes for series such as 'Maigret' and 'Doctor Finlay's Casebook'. With Hussein, Verity Lambert also set about choosing the cast for 'The Tribe of Gum', including the all-important roles of the four regulars.

After considering several other names, Lambert decided to ask 'tough guy' actor William Hartnell to play the part of the Doctor, having been impressed by his performance as the talent scout in the film 'This Sporting Life'. At first Hartnell's agent - his son-in-law - was reluctant to suggest to him the idea of appearing in what was ostensibly a children's programme, but he eventually did so as he realised that the role of the Doctor was exactly the kind of character part the actor was looking for after years of being type-cast as a villain or 'heavy'. Hartnell was impressed enough after reading the first script to meet Verity Lambert, and when he did so the enthusiastic young producer won him over. He accepted the part without hesitation.

The role of Susan went to Carole Ann Ford, who had previously appeared on BBC television in episodes of 'Moonstrike' and 'Dixon of Dock Green', a 'Suspense' play - 'To the Public Danger' - 'Crying Down the Lane' and 'Crime Patrol'; William Russell, a very well-known television actor who had recently worked for the BBC on 'The Patch Card', 'Moonstrike', 'Jane Eyre' (in which he played St. John Rivers), 'A Song of Sixpence', 'Nautilus' and 'Adventure Story', took the part of Ian; and Jacqueline Hill, a former model whose BBC credits included 'Maigret', 'The Men from Room 13', 'The Watching Cat' and 'The Six Proud Walkers' was cast as Barbara.

Clearly, by August 1963 a great deal had already been achieved; there was still much more to be done, however, and the production team devoted themselves to their respective tasks with considerable enthusiasm. David Whitaker in particular spent many hours of his own time working on the scripts. As June Barry recalls, "David was working all the hours God sent on 'Doctor Who' before it began, very often working on many of the scripts with the writers until he was convinced they were 'right' for 'Doctor Who'. From the very start he had a very clear idea in his mind where he wanted the series to go, how it should work, and what effect it should have on the public.

"He felt 'Doctor Who' offered a clever contrast of central characters. There was the good-looking bloke - a virtually essential ingredient in any long-running serial - a sympathetic older woman, a pretty young girl, and the mystery figure everyone could look up to.

"More than anything else David wanted 'Doctor Who' to have the very best writers it could afford, to overcome its shoestring production budget.

"David crafted and shaped 'Doctor Who'. Sydney and Donald evolved the frame, but the myth came from him. He worked harder on the show than anyone else, steering many of the writers he brought into 'Doctor Who'. And he created far more than he is ever given credit for."

Specifically, as impressive storylines continued to come in from freelance writers Whitaker grew increasingly keen to 'tone down' the educational content favoured by Sydney Newman and Donald Wilson. While still wanting to retain the 'informational core' to the stories, both he and Verity Lambert felt that the show should be as dramatic and exciting as possible for its young audience. They were also determined that the science fiction stories should feature monsters; not the bug-eyed kind so disliked by Newman and Wilson, but intelligently-handled monsters which would act as characters in their own right. Whitaker had never been entirely happy with the two An-

Actress Jackie Lane, who was later to appear in 'Doctor Who' as Dodo, was at one stage considered for the role of the Doctor's grand-daughter, Susan. In the end, though, the part went to Carole Ann Ford (left).

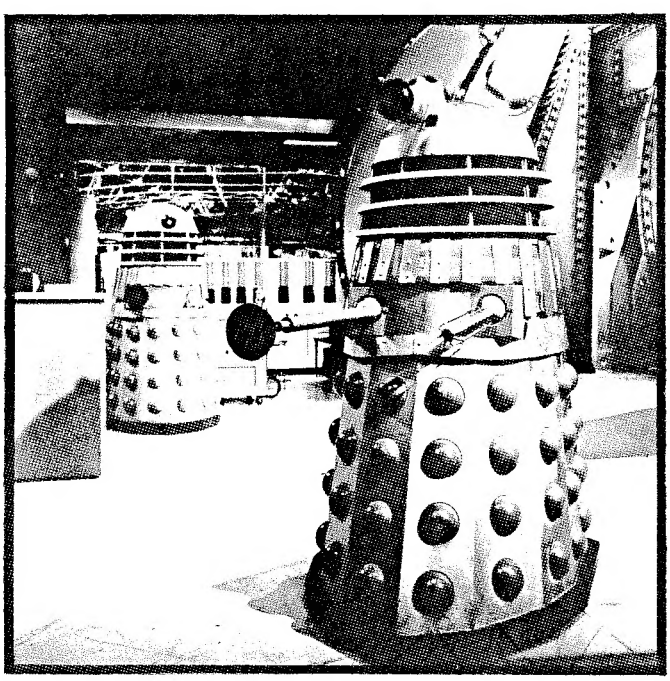
thony Coburn scripts commissioned by Donald Wilson, and in the end he decided to drop 'The Robots' altogether. Malcolm Hulke's storyline 'The Hidden Planet' (see 'Season 3 Special Release' page "S3-04") can be seen as another casualty of this change of emphasis. In place of 'The Robots' Whitaker commissioned from ALS writer Terry Nation a seven-part story with the working title of 'Dr. Who and the Mutants' in which the four travellers would journey to the planet Skaro and encounter menacing creatures called Daleks. During August and September 1963 he also continued to assemble the other scripts which would make up the fifty-two week series. Terry Nation and John Lucarotti each had a second story commissioned and Dennis Spooner, a good friend of Nation's, was asked to contribute a historical segment. Storylines from writers Peter R. Newman and Louis Marks were also under active consideration.

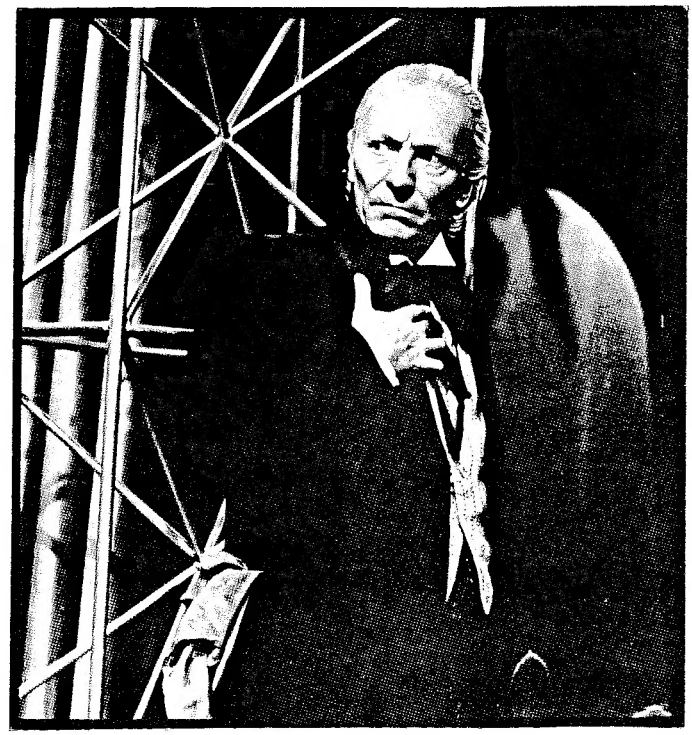
But what of the form and content of these stories? Although drama on television was relatively new, it had the traditions of novels, the theatre and films to draw on. A cursory glance at the dramatic requirements enumerated by Malcolm Hulke in his 'Writing for Television' book is enough to see that the early stories and principal characters of 'Doctor Who' obeyed the most elementary and therefore most powerful rules. A character should have a confident and characters should have a bond. In 'The Tribe of Gum' the Doctor has Susan as a confident and Ian has Barbara. They share a common bond in Susan, who is the Doctor's grand-daughter and Ian's and Barbara's pupil. Later the common bond was to be the fact that they were all travellers in the TARDIS, with a common goal - to get back to 1963.

From these characters the stories developed with the creation of binary oppositions to produce the vital dramatic conflict: Ian and Barbara versus the Doctor and Susan; Susan and Barbara versus the Doctor and Ian; the Doctor versus Ian; Susan versus Barbara; and other permutations. As the stories moved from 'inside' the TARDIS to 'outside', other opposing groups would be introduced: Kal versus Za; Daleks versus Thals; and so on. These 'outside' groups would be encountered through the splitting up of the Doctor/Susan/Ian/Barbara quadrangle, with each of the four characters 'taking sides'.

Quite apart from these important dramatic considerations, there were good technical reasons for having at least four principal characters. Due to the dictates of continuous recording (see 'Season 1 Special Release', page "S1-07"), this was really the minimum number of characters needed to avoid the situation where a single actor is left alone on a set, thus necessitating the inclusion of unjustifiable dialogue or 'business' (quite often television characters seem to be bordering on insanity - to fill up the silence they talk to themselves). Although situations of this nature could be avoided by inventive writing or the use of telecine inserts, the fact that questions such as these had to be borne in mind illustrates very well the way in which dramatic and technical requirements combine to limit what can be done in a television programme.

The powerful formula of character oppositions described above was played out against a background which was, self-evidently, science fiction. Even those stories with an historical setting - roughly equal in number to those with





an alien/futuristic setting - were science fiction in essence, as they centred around the four travellers and the fact that they were out of their own times. That Sydney Newman should have opted for a science fiction series in the first place is interesting in itself. Irene Shubik has noted that Newman saw science fiction as an ideal way of making contemporary discussion of social issues entertaining. Indeed, her own programmes 'Thirteen Against Fate', 'Journey into the Unknown' and 'Out of the Unknown' demonstrated this quality very well. Of course, there was no question of 'Doctor Who', as primarily a children's programme, dealing with social issues in anything other than a very basic manner, but Newman's belief in the ability of science fiction to convey 'messages' in an entertaining way would doubtless have been at the back of his mind when he determined that the show should have an educational function.

The popularity of the science fiction genre in the 1950s and 1960s was indicative of changing public attitudes towards science in general. Since the Second World War and its many scientific marvels (radar, the atom bomb etc) science had become a popular concern. It was science that was to build a better Britain forged, to use Prime Minister Harold Wilson's words, "in the white heat of technology".

In the field of literature science fiction gained long-awaited acceptance, with the works of H.G. Wells, John Wyndham and others even being included on school syllabuses. The final seal of respectability came in 1961 with the publication of Martin Amis' 'New Maps of Hell', a survey of the genre. Contemporary science fiction writers were meanwhile seeking new directions, creating what is retrospectively termed the 'new wave'. Here, science fiction unwittingly became intellectually fashionable or 'trendy'. The new consumer society that was the 1960s consumed everything, and for one brief moment high culture and popular culture met in an environment of remarkable paradoxes only hinted at by the term 'pop art'. It is true that science fiction was slightly subversive and capable of showing up the foibles of capitalism, but as 'Dan Dare' demonstrated it could just as easily be on the side of the angels. For perhaps the only time in its history, science fiction became associated with mainstream science and mainstream fiction. It was popular, cultural, contemporary, relevant and, of course, entertaining.

Although Verity Lambert admits that her production team knew little about science and had difficulty sustaining the scientific content of 'Doctor Who', the programme was in its own way an important part of this wider post-War popularisation of science and science fiction. Producing a science fiction drama for television was now akin to adapting the classics - a role the BBC had reserved for itself. Science fiction stories were the modern classics. Imaginative, yes, but also respectable and popular.

The most immediate literary source for 'Doctor Who' was - as Sydney Newman has admitted - H.G. Wells, and in particular his novel 'The Time Machine'. It was this that provided the blueprint for the series. But 'Doctor Who'

was not to be concerned solely with time travel; it was envisaged as an adventure in Space and Time. The elements of space travel and, indeed, adventure owed rather more to Jules Verne than to H.G. Wells.

To the extent that Space and Time can be viewed as separate entities with different qualities, Verne may be associated with the former and Wells with the latter. This is easily illustrated by comparing Verne's 'A Journey to the Centre of the Earth' with Wells' 'The Time Machine'. Both are concerned with the theme of evolution, which is essentially to do with Time. Verne, however, treats Time through the metaphor of Space. As the travellers in his novel descend toward their destination they in effect descend into the Earth's past by encountering cavemen, dinosaurs and primordial flora. Finally, if only in a hallucination, the Earth's molten core is reached - the planet's volcanic dawn. Wells, on the other hand, almost entirely eliminates the element of Space travel in his treatment of the same theme. As his anonymous Traveller returns home at the end of the story he finds that his machine has moved only a few feet from its starting point (due to having been stolen and moved an equivalent distance in the future). In effect, the Traveller in Wells' book remains motionless while the future rushes to meet him.

This illustrates the different influences Verne and Wells, and the literary traditions they were a part of, had on 'Doctor Who'. For the Spacially-orientated Verne the important element in a story was the journey, not the destination. Thus, to the extent that it was influenced by Verne, the TARDIS in 'Doctor Who' was to be like the Nautilus, the bullet-shaped space capsule, the balloon or the airship of Robar the Conqueror. It was a piece of extraordinary technology, wonderful in its own right, its purpose being to transport us on an exciting adventure with no fixed destination. As Ned and the Professor are captured by Nemo and taken on a tour 20,000 leagues beneath the sea, so Ian and Barbara are captured by the Doctor and taken on a tour of Time itself. Unlike the later 'Star Trek' series, however, 'Doctor Who' was always far more influenced by Wells than by Verne. In Wells' work it is the destination that is important. In the tradition of Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels' we encounter societies which are parodies or satires of our own. How we arrive at our destination is unimportant compared with the lessons we learn once there. Verne would doubtless have disapproved of the TARDIS. There was never any serious attempt to explain how it travelled in time, by what means known to Physics it worked. Wells would have done exactly what 'Doctor Who' did: use the TARDIS simply as a dramatic device to reach a destination where the important element of the story - the social comment - could take place. So the early stories of 'Doctor Who' would take us to the planet Skaro for a warning of the dangers of atomic warfare; or to visit the Aztecs, where great civilisation co-exists with great inhumanity; or to the Sense-Sphere to see the folly of human greed and misplaced trust.

Of course, some stories would combine Verne with Wells. Once on Skaro the travellers were to engage in a Vernian journey across the planet. Then, later, they were to join the caravan of Marco Polo on a trek across the Roof of the World and the Gobi desert. In the final analysis, however, Wells' 'The Time Machine' was undoubtedly by far the most powerful influence on these early stories. If it were not for the Second World War overtones, Terry Nation's Dalek story would be virtually a straight re-working of the main plot of 'The Time Machine'; that of the pacifist Eloi and the carnivorous Morlocks. As the Eloi in Wells' novel live above ground in a garden, so the Thals in Nation's script live in the valley; as Wells' Morlocks exist below ground with the machinery of a dying civilisation, so too do Nation's Daleks. In fact, the ending of the Dalek story more closely resembles that of Forester's 'The Machine Stops', which was a pastiche of Wells' concerns, than that of 'The Time Machine' itself.

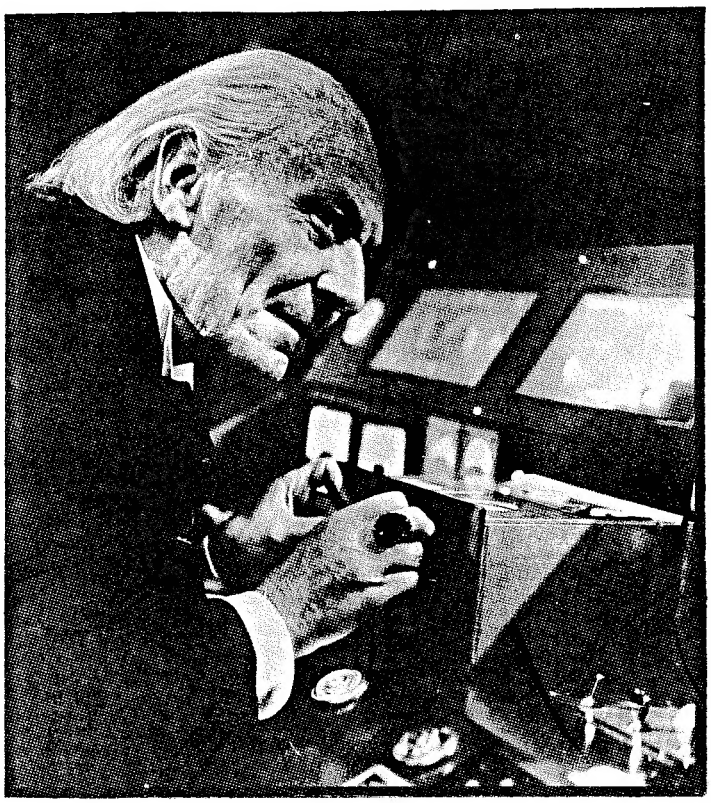
But the influence of 'The Time Machine' on 'Doctor Who' went well beyond superficial plot similarities. Essentially, 'Doctor Who' actualised the potentiality of Wells' story. The words "just imagine" appear twice in 'The Time Machine' and point to the fact that most of the time travelling in the book is done by the imagination. The people gathered to hear the Traveller's tale - and hence the readers - are asked to imagine the world of the future. Even the Traveller himself never visits the prehistoric past he envisages. The Doctor would also ask "Can you imagine?", but in fact the viewer would never have to; it would be right there on the screen, for all to see.

Wells argued that using our imaginations to speculate on the past or future is the same as actually going there. Indeed, the Traveller never encounters anything in the future that he has not previously speculated on. 'Doctor Who', however, would by its very nature as a television programme take the events the Traveller imagines and show them. In 'The Time Machine' the Traveller wonders:

"What might not have happened to men? What cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness and had developed into something unhuman, unsympathetic and overwhelmingly powerful?"

'Doctor Who' would not ask us to imagine. It would show us the Daleks.

The spirit of 'The Time Machine' was to haunt the early episodes of 'Doctor Who'. Much of Wells' imagery would be evoked: the mercury fluid link would recall the Traveller's mercury barometer; the garden of the Eloi with its variegated shrubs contrasted with the library and White Sphinx would be evoked in the petrified forest of Skaro and the Daleks' metal city; and what better description is there of the TARDIS' dematerialisation than Wells' words, "... the little machine ... became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps ... and it was gone -



vanished"?

These, then, were the principal influences on the early stories of 'Doctor Who', and the main sources from which they drew. As the months of August and September 1963 passed, the first of these stories, Anthony Coburn's 'The Tribe of Gum' - now re-titled 'Dr. Who and a 100,000 B.C.' - gradually progressed towards production. This progress was far from smooth, however. In particular, Verity Lambert and her team were having to work against a background of increasing hostility from others at the BBC.

The cause of this hostility was the radical 'new broom' approach Sydney Newman had adopted in his short time at the Corporation; an approach which had been far from popular in some quarters of this traditionally conservative establishment. The popularisation of programmes was seen by many as equivalent to a lowering of standards, and the fact that Newman had recruited Verity Lambert, Irene Shubik and other former colleagues from ABC in preference to people already working at the Corporation also rankled. Moreover, the controversial move had been made of all but abolishing the Children's Department, leaving it with a greatly reduced budget and manpower. Programmes which would previously have been made by that Department were now being handled by Drama instead, and this included 'Doctor Who'. This led, perhaps unsurprisingly, to a considerable degree of resentment being felt towards the programme. Verity Lambert elaborates:

"With our budget of £2,500 per episode, we had to rely on people being highly inventive and doing their best with what little money we could give them. Building the TARDIS was an enormous initial outlay as everything about it had to be different - all new with nothing from stock. Similarly with the Daleks we had their cost to bear in mind, plus the cost of constructing their metal city.

"Now the truth of the matter is you could recover some of your huge outlay on these stories by doing historical dramas where things like costumes could come from stock. A lot of people, though, didn't see this and just assumed, from what we were spending on the 'science' shows, that we were on big money at the expense of the Children's Department - a point which Sydney Newman and Donald Wilson were constantly having to contest."

Although no industrial action was ever taken over these organisational changes at the Corporation, there was what amounted to a 'withdrawal of good will' by staff in some Departments. Of particular significance to 'Doctor Who' was the fact that Jack Kine's Visual Effects Department declined to work on the programme, arguing that they had insufficient staff and resources to take on such a great additional workload. Indeed, it was to be several years before this dispute would be settled (see page "21-17"). This meant that tasks which would ordinarily have been handled by Kine's team had to be farmed out instead to Design Department staff and outside contractors. The Daleks, for example, were blueprinted by Raymond P. Cusick of the Design Department and constructed by the Shawcraft company.

As if this situation were not bad enough in itself, Verity Lambert and her team were presented with an additional - and more immediate - problem when they had a major disagreement with Sydney Newman and Donald Wilson. Lambert takes up the story:

"The crisis came when Donald Wilson saw the scripts for the first Dalek serial. Having spent so much time defending 'Doctor Who', because he believed in it, he saw the Daleks just as bug-eyed monsters, which went against what he felt should be the theme of the science fiction stories. There was a strong disagreement between us - in fact it went as far as Donald Wilson telling us not to do the show."

Sydney Newman recalls giving Lambert a similar 'dressing down', but in the end, of course, the Dalek story did go ahead. As Lambert explains:

"What saved it in the end was purely the fact that we had nothing to replace it with in the time allotted. It was Daleks or nothing."

This comment by Verity Lambert is a revealing one in that it illustrates the tightness of the schedule to which she and her team were working. This was to give rise to proolems of its own. Firstly, when it transpired that Rex Tucker would be unable after all to direct the Dalek serial, Lambert had to find a replacement for him very quickly. The man she chose was Christopher Barry, whose previous work for the BBC included 'The Net', episodes of 'Moonstrike' and 'No Cloak, No Dagger'. Secondly, and far more importantly, it was realised relatively late in the day that the sets for John Lucarotti's Marco Polo story would not be ready in time for the planned production date. This potentially disastrous situation was eventually salvaged by Story Editor David Whitaker hastily penning a two-part story himself (see page "3-09"). In this story, which had the working title 'Dr. Who inside the Spaceship', the Doctor and his companions would seemingly be threatened by an unknown menace within the TARDIS itself - thus giving viewers a chance to familiarise themselves with the interior of the Doctor's Ship; which was, of course, the only set available. (As if further evidence were needed of the remarkable influence of 'The Time Machine', it is worth noting that the plot of Whitaker's story was virtually a 'reversal' of that part of Wells' novel in which the Traveller, on leaving the world of the Eloi and Morlocks, journeys forward to a time when the Earth is on the edge of destruction. "People unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin" Wells writes, "forget that the planets must ultimately fall back one by one into the parent body".) The director originally assigned to 'Inside the Spaceship' was Paddy Russell, who had previously handled the 'Return and Answer' series and episodes of 'Compact', as well as being Production Assistant to Rudolph Cartier; she too was destined to drop out before production began, however.

Of course, despite all of the aforementioned problems and hurdles Verity Lambert and her team had to overcome, 'Doctor Who' did go into production as planned and on schedule. The first filming for the series took place on 20th August 1963 with the shooting of the innovative title sequence designed by Associate Producer Mervyn Pinfield and graphics expert Bernard Lodge. Then, on Friday 13th September, there took place what was termed an 'experimental session' in the recording studio. There was never any intention of actually recording anything in this session; the aim was simply to get the sets erected in the studio for a 'trial run', ironing out any technical problems which might occur on this unusually complex show.

Filming for the series' pilot episode took place at Ealing studios on 19th September 1963 and the episode itself was recorded in Studio D, Lime Grove just eight days later on Friday 27th September. The intention was that if this recording proved successful the pilot would be transmitted as the series' opening episode on Saturday 16th November; if not, it would be re-recorded on Friday 18th October and transmission would begin instead on 23rd November. As it transpired, events were to follow the latter of these two courses (see page "1-11").

BBC documentation reveals that, despite the furore surrounding President Kennedy's assassination the previous day, the first episode of 'Doctor Who' was eventually broadcast only slightly later than scheduled at sixteen minutes and twenty seconds after five o'clock in the late afternoon of Saturday 23rd November 1963. The adventure in Space and Time had begun ....

SPACE & TIME

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